The Swedish Coast Guard and Dangerous Goods Inspections

Within this authority, the SCG conducts many random DG transport vehicle inspections throughout Sweden's 27 ports authorized to transport DG. The goal is to conduct at least one inspection per quarter in each port and/or shipping line that trans-ports DG. By doing this, the objective is to decrease the number of deficiencies with maritime transport of DG, thereby increasing safety. Sounds simple, but it is not. Only specially trained SCG personnel are assigned the duty of conducting DG vehicle inspections. This is an art that is not learned merely from a book, but rather over time. There are many tricks and pitfalls that await an inexperienced inspector. Even after a DG inspectors initial training, there is yearly refresher training combined with practical exercises. In addition to this, to reinforce their training, SCG DG inspection personnel conduct many classes throughout Sweden. This is one field of expertise where training is continuous.

The life and times of a SCG DG inspector are not glamorous, especially when conducting an inspection in the middle of winter storm. To compensate for this drawback, there is some compensation such as the SCG's specially designed motor home, below.

This camper van is the mobile office and home of the SCG, used during their inspections in the Swedish ports.

Unfortunately, some compensations like DG transport in the Baltic Sea are considered to have a potential for being used for terrorist purposes. Examples are several kinds of explosives, deliberately used for terrorist purposes. Starting in 2003 with the 13th edition from the UN Recommendations/Model Regulations, some compensation such as the SCG’s specially designed motor home, below.

This home may not look much, but in the middle of winter, it offers much in way of protection from the elements as well as communication capabilities with the outside world. All the necessities needed to assist a SCG DG inspector in the harshest of environments have been considered.

Things though are changing for the better for the SCG DG inspector. As of July 2006, the SCG will be given independent responsibility and authorization to supervise and inspect all vehicles for DG in the ports. This includes all vehicles for further transport on both road and seaborne.

Furthermore, the SCG will be given the right to access closed spaces, e.g. locked spaces. This is great news for the SCG and is the result of smart planning by the Swedish Authorities for more efficient and effective use of limited manpower resources. Although, this new authorization will require more training for many of the DG inspectors because all vehicles coming into Sweden will have to comply with the European Agreement concerning the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road (ADR). So all in all, things are looking good on the horizon for the SCG DG vehicle inspector.

More information on the Swedish Coast Guard can be found at: http://www.kust- bevakningen.se/innanfoext/kvbvlemsidosa/ engelska/english.htm


This exercise was lead by the Swedish Coast Guard (SCG) in concert with the DaGoB Work Package 2 (WP2) leader, the Swedish Rescue Services Agency, in keeping with the DaGoB objective to organize joint field and demonstration to share valuable information in practice.

The security regulations are already in force in several European countries. For Sweden, they are expected to apply from 1 July, 2006.

The Swedish Coast Guard and Dangerous Goods Inspections

In total, there were thirteen Finnish, seven Swedish, four Estonians, one Lithuanian, one German, and four Latvians who participated in the exercise, which began at Hotel Roslagen in Norrtälje, Sweden.

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Exercise Roslagen

The exercise was divided into two parts:

(a) the observance of an actual Dangerous Goods (DG) Inspection conducted by the Swedish Coast Guard (SCG) at the Port of Kapellskär, 90 kilometres north of Stockholm, and
(b) a seminar on DG inspections and regulations with frequent discussions between DaGoB public and private stakeholders, and even a short class on risk management.

The first part of the exercise began at 0800 on May 17 with the transport to the Port of Kapellskär. As fortune smiled on the group, the weather was sunny and comfortably cool. When the bus arrived, the group was divided into two sub-groups. Each sub-group shadowed a specially trained SCG DG inspection team in order to gain first-hand knowledge of the inner workings of a DG transport inspection. Only those DG transport vehicles travelling out of Sweden were inspected.

The initial focus of each SCG inspection team was to first inspect those DG vehicles that have declared to transport DG. This was determined by the paperwork submitted to the Port of Kapellskär when a DG transport vehicle checks-in. Thus, after DG transport vehicles were staged in segregated lanes, their paperwork was then delivered to the SCG DG inspectors for analysis. Once this preliminary analysis is concluded, then the SCG DG inspectors moved to the corresponding DG transport vehicle to discuss the paperwork with the driver.

In the case of this driver’s paperwork, it was correct and in order, but there were several instances that day in which discrepancies were found. Some of the most common discrepancies are the use of initials vice signatures and signatures without the requisite printed name. These measures are to ensure that the DG transport vehicle has been authorized by competent authority to transport a certain amount and type of DG.

The ferry port of Kapellskär

Next, the inspection team and driver inspected the vehicle and cargo. This was a very detailed inspection. The first priority, though, was to locate the DG cargo and ensure that it was properly secured and that it matched the paperwork. Then the rest of the cargo was inspected to ensure that no other DG was unaccounted for and that the rest of the load was properly secured. From there, the inspectors and driver proceeded around the vehicle to ensure that the rest of the vehicle was also in compliance with the International Maritime Dangerous Goods (IMDG) Code. The bottom line is that whenever any DG transport vehicle is to embark on any type of sea transport, it must be in complete compliance with the IMDG Code.

At the coffee break, all exercise participants were treated to some refreshments and received a brief by Bengt Ohlsson, the Port of Kapellskär Supervisor. Here the participants learned that the Port of Kapellskär is owned and operated by Port of Stockholm, was established during the 1970s, and is well suited for fast freight transport to and from Finland and the Baltic States. Also briefed were some of the planned port improvements, many of which are directed to comply with today’s modern DG transport rules and regulations. This situation is an excellent example of the continuous process improvements needed to maintain a logistic infrastructure’s currency and viability in handling DG transport. This is especially true with the Port of Kapellskär having over 2.5 million tonnes of freight passing through it in 2004.

After the coffee break, all exercise participants witnessed random transport vehicle inspections. These types of inspections did not focus only on DG, but also on cargo securing, weight restrictions, and vehicle securities.

Several of the inspected transport vehicles required substantial corrective measures due to the following:

(a) no use of any cargo securing mechanism,
(b) cargo straps were used but were incorrectly attached to the trailer such as to the trailers aluminium siding,
(c) cargo straps were laid over the top of the cargo but the straps had no tension, and
(d) worn out cargo straps were used with substantial abrasions and tears thereby significantly reducing the cargo straps securing capability.

All of the required corrective measures were rectified but many of the drivers had to purchase new cargo straps.

Next on the agenda was lunch back at Hotel Roslagen, but not before a group photo was taken, above.

After lunch, the second part of Exercise Roslagen began with a brief by the SCG on their DG inspection program. More on this will be discussed in the following article, The Swedish Coast Guard and Dangerous Goods.

The next series of events were directed towards posing general questions about DG transport inspections and procedures. Each country within the Baltic Sea Region was then given an opportunity to comment and share their views on each question. This enabled better exchange of information between DaGoB private and public sector stakeholders. Most of the discussion and views were characterized as candid and sincere. All exercise participants are to be commended for their openness and willingness to share both their positive points, as well as their challenges. These question and discussion sessions continued the next morning, on May 18, for several hours. Then Alben Mullai, from Lund University in Sweden, gave an excellent short presentation on the basics of risk management and how it applies to DG transport. Afterwards, the SCG presented some of their findings in the form of digital photography, from many years of experience. This helped to promote and reinforce correct implementation of DG regulations among the stakeholders.

In conclusion, Exercise Roslagen proved to be an excellent opportunity for public and private stakeholders in the Baltic Sea Region to witness a DG transport inspection by the SCG, and to get together and share their views on DG transport. The result is that Exercise Roslagen has set a superb standard for future gatherings within the DaGoB Project.

Many thanks go to the dedicated SCG team for their excellent exercise program, instruction and openness. Last but not least, a hearty congratulations and job-well-done goes to Sten-Olov Södergård for his outstanding efforts and results as the exercise coordinator and moderator.